

# DEVELOPMENTS in the CUBAN SITUATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### INTRODUCTION

On January 1, 1959, Castro gained control of Cuba by enlisting the support of Cubans against the Batista dictatorship, and the majority of the Cuban people supported this revolution. Castro deliberately deceived the Cuban people until he was firmly in power and then betrayed their trust by turning Cuba over to the Communists. Castro boldly admitted his deception of the Cuban people in a speech which he delivered on December 2, 1961.

As early as 1957 the U.S. Government expressed its concern over political unrest in Cuba. In 1958 we suspended arms shipments to the Batista government, which, in disregard of an agreement with the United States, had used them to combat the revolutionary movement headed by Fidel Castro.

When the Castro regime came to power in 1959, the United States looked upon it with sympathy, recognized it almost immediately, and welcomed its promises of political freedom and social justice for the Cuban people. We made clear our willingness to discuss Cuba's economic needs. Despite our concern at the Cuban regime's mounting hostility toward the United States and its growing Communist tendencies, we attempted patiently and consistently from early 1959 until well into 1960 to negotiate differences with the regime.

Elements in the Castro movement were engaged in anti-American activities even during the revolution against Batista. Soon after it came to power in 1959,

*Notations - Cuba*

*Oct 62*



the Castro government turned away from its previous promises, permitted Communist influence to grow, attacked and persecuted its own supporters in Cuba who expressed opposition to communism, arbitrarily seized U.S. properties, and made a series of baseless charges against the United States. It ignored, rejected, or imposed impossible conditions on repeated U.S. offers to cooperate and negotiate. In 1960 Cuba established close political, economic, and military relationships with the Sino-Soviet bloc, while increasing the pace and vehemence of its measures and attacks against the United States.

In mid-1960 the United States and its allies initiated a series of measures as a deliberate response to Communist efforts to establish a beachhead for subversion in this hemisphere. The United States prohibited the further import of Cuban sugar into this country. Exports, except for certain foods and medicines permitted on humanitarian grounds, were prohibited soon afterward. In February 1962, the President made the embargo substantially complete, extending the import prohibition to indirect as well as direct purchases.

In October 1962 it was discovered that the Soviet Union was secretly building bases in Cuba capable of launching nuclear missiles against most of the countries of the Western Hemisphere. The President reported on this development to the American people on October 22. There are a few points of special significance.

(a) Cuba is not an issue for the Western Hemisphere alone. It is a much broader issue of importance to the entire world. As the President said, the 1930's taught us a clear lesson: "Aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war."

(b) The President emphasized that the secret, swift buildup of Communist missiles in Cuba on our doorstep was a deliberately provocative change in the status quo which the United States could not accept if our courage and commitments were ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe. The U.S.S.R. had made a secret, unprecedented move into Cuba with nuclear missiles. This was a major effort to change the strategic balance of power. Unless we met this

challenge, we would invite the Soviets to make similar moves elsewhere and to demand concessions in other parts of the world.

(c) NATO and the Western Powers have consistently made it clear that our actions are purely defensive. The Soviet and Cuban leaders have consistently shown their offensive intentions. Cuba has sponsored military activities against other Caribbean countries. Cuba is heavily engaged in providing money, propaganda, and people for subversive activities in Latin America. It has become a training ground for guerrillas and for street mob leaders.

Therefore, the United States has responded in order to preserve its own security and to activate the collective security machinery on which so many nations rely for survival.

## President Kennedy's Proposals To Resolve the Cuban Crisis

The President directed that these seven initial steps be taken immediately:

(1) Imposition of a strict quarantine in which all ships found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons for Cuba would be turned back. Extension of the quarantine to other types of cargo and carriers if needed. But no denial of the necessities of life to Cuba.

(2) Intensification of the close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup. Preparation by the Armed Forces for any eventualities. Should the buildup continue, further action would be taken.

(3) Declaration that it will be the U.S. policy to regard a nuclear attack from Cuba against any nation in this hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the U.S.S.R.

(4) Reinforcement of the U.S. base at Guantanamo; evacuation of U.S. dependents; additional military units put on a standby alert basis.

(5) Calling of an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the OAS to consider the threat to hemispheric security and to invoke articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action.

(6) Request that an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council be convened immediately. The United States to present a resolution calling

for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

(7) Appeal by the President to Premier Khrushchev to "halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two

nations. . . . to abandon this course of world domination and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and transform the history of man. . . . to move the world back from the abyss of destruction by returning to his Government's own words that it had no need to station missiles outside its own territory, and withdrawing these weapons from Cuba. . . ."

## Questions and Answers

**What actually is the nature of the relationship between Castro Cuba and the Soviet bloc?**

The Soviet Union, in league with Castro, completely dominates Cuba politically, economically, and militarily. The Soviet bloc accounts for 80 percent of the country's commerce. Some 5,000 Soviet personnel are located throughout the island in major industrial and military installations. Beginning in July, the U.S.S.R., moving with unprecedented speed, poured military equipment into the country.

**Why did President Kennedy say he would hold the Soviet Union accountable for any missile attack launched from Cuba?**

Such action by Cuba could come about only through use of Soviet missiles and equipment, guided and operated by Soviet military technicians and launched from missile bases furnished and installed by the U.S.S.R.

**Can the U.S. action be considered an aggression against Cuba?**

Not in any sense of the word. The quarantine is designed to deal with a threat to the peace by a foreign power on Cuban soil. This determination was made by the United States for its own security, but it did not act alone. Rather, the international organization having jurisdiction in the area, the Organization of American States, recommended action under the Rio Treaty of 1947, which contains provisions and procedures for collective defense in the Western

Hemisphere (articles 6, 8, and 20). Only then did the United States issue the proclamation of quarantine.

**Why did the United States wait so long before taking action against Cuba?**

Ever since the Cuban government adopted an antagonistic policy toward the United States, our Government has taken action which it deemed appropriate to the circumstances, beginning with restrictions against imports of Cuban sugar—Cuba's primary source of income—in 1960 and continuing through measures to block exports by Cuba of weapons and propaganda to other Latin American countries.

**Why did the United States impose economic sanctions on Cuba, helping to drive Castro into the arms of the Soviet Union?**

The chief purpose of the U. S. economic policies toward Cuba has been to inhibit the development of the Cuban economy as a model of communism for other Latin countries, while making it as expensive a burden as possible for its Soviet masters. It has not been our policy to inflict hardship upon the Cuban people themselves, and we have made special exceptions in our trade restrictions for such items as foodstuffs and medicines.

The decision to obstruct agricultural trade between the United States and Cuba in early 1960 was taken by the Cubans themselves and was not prompted by U. S. trade restrictions or by an unfavorable balance of trade with this country. Cuba's food problems during the past

2 years have been the result of its own failures in agricultural management and its reluctance to do business with the United States. Our decision to stop buying Cuba's sugar came only after Cuban government officials made clear that they viewed dealings with the United States as a form of "economic slavery" and that they intended to redirect the pattern of their trade toward the Soviet bloc.

**Why is the United States, the richest and strongest nation in the world, worrying about communism in Cuba?**

Because once a country falls under the control of Communists its government is then subject to control by the Kremlin and it becomes an instrument for the aggressive Communist world movement. In the case of Cuba, the Soviet leaders have seen fit to use the Communist Castro regime there as a tool for extending their power and their ideology into this hemisphere. Moreover, Cuba has a strategic location athwart key transportation routes in the Caribbean. Most importantly, the island has been converted into a military base directly threatening all of its free neighbors and posing a threat to world peace.

**In what other ways has Castroism been a threat to the hemisphere?**

Cuba has given moral and material support to Communist and Communist-influenced groups engaged in subversive activities in every one of the other 19 Latin American Republics. The Castro regime is a main prong of the Sino-Soviet drive to weaken and eventually destroy democratic political institutions in all Latin America. Cuban subversive activities include indoctrination and training of hundreds of other Latin nationals, covert material support to subversive groups, and intensive radio and printed propaganda.

**Was the 26th of July Movement, led by Castro, Communist-dominated? When and how did the Communists get control?**

At the time it gained power in Cuba, Castro's 26th of July Movement had become the symbol

of the legitimate aspirations of the Cuban people. Many liberal and reform-minded Cubans supported Castro and his movement. Increasing Communist influence became noticeable in 1959 and accelerated in 1960. By 1961 known Communists were increasingly being placed in top government positions and plans were set for merging the movement with the Cuban Communist Party. On December 1, 1961, Castro himself announced that he was a Marxist-Leninist.

**Why did the U.S. Government not realize Castro was a Communist all along?**

Although he had long been inclined toward the left, Castro did not openly espouse the Communist ideology--betraying the followers of his revolution--until 1961, after his regime was firmly installed in Habana. Even in his early administrations there were numerous respected and moderate leaders. The true nature of the regime, even when this was recognized by many Cubans, did not alter the fact that Castro was already entrenched in power.

**Are the Cuban people still behind Castro?**

Though it is hard to judge accurately, it is estimated that Castro retains the positive support of only about 20 percent of the population--mostly people under 25 years of age and bureaucrats committed to the success of the revolution. Disaffection is growing steadily, as is shown both by the number of disillusioned Cubans fleeing the country and by the increasing instances of spontaneous uprisings, anti-government sabotage, and widespread passive resistance. Dissatisfaction is beginning to grow even among those under 25, as well as among the older Cubans.

**With so little popular support, how does Castro stay in power?**

Cuba today is a police state. Castro does not tolerate any opposition to his regime.

By far his most effective instrument for maintaining political control is the nationwide network of so-called Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. These amount to a block-to-

black spy system through which the private affairs of each citizen are monitored and through which he must obtain such things as ration books, new jobs, travel permits, etc. Some half-million persons participate in operating this spy system, or 1 out of every 14 Cubans.

**How many Cubans have been executed or imprisoned by Castro and his followers?**

To date, the Castro regime has put to death over 1,000 Cubans who were variously accused of having cooperated with Batista, of actively opposing the regime, or of supporting the efforts of so-called "counter-revolutionary" patriot groups on the island. A great many more have been imprisoned as political enemies of the regime--perhaps over 50,000 now lie in Castro's jails for such offenses.

**How many Cuban refugees have fled the Castro regime?**

Over 200,000 Cubans have taken refuge in other countries bordering the Caribbean--about half of them in the United States.

**Castro promised free elections when he took over in 1958. Have they been held?**

In spite of his earlier promises to hold democratic elections "within one year" of gaining power, Castro has now abandoned all plans of over holding elections. He claims that they are unnecessary because the Cuban people have already demonstrated their clear and overwhelming support for his rule.

**What has happened to Cuba's standard of living under Castro?**

While there is no doubt that Castro has accomplished a more even distribution of Cuba's wealth, living conditions for most Cubans have declined severely under communism. Where once the average Cuban enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in the hemisphere, he now finds that many items which he once considered essential are rationed or altogether unavailable. High unemployment continues, con-

sumption generally has been severely curtailed, promises of new low-cost housing have failed to materialize, and the Cubans are now dependent upon the Soviet bloc for many everyday food items.

**What kind of Cuba does the United States hope for?**

We hope for the establishment of a democratic government in Cuba which will restore the integrity of the Cuban revolution and which will help the Cuban people achieve freedom from autocratic tyranny and foreign intervention.

**Americans are always talking about self-determination, so why doesn't America allow the Cubans to go their own way?**

The tide of refugees from Cuba and the many thousands jailed for political reasons by Castro indicate that many Cubans are not satisfied with the Castro regime. The popular revolution of 1959 has been subordinated to the international conspiracy of communism, which is stifling free expression of Cuban opinion through elections and free press. In his speech of October 22 President Kennedy expressed his wish to see Cubans "free from foreign domination, free to choose their own leaders, free to select their own systems. . . ."

**Why were some of the Latin American nations so slow to share United States concern over Castro in Cuba?**

Some larger Latin American countries were formerly reluctant to condemn the Cuban regime because of their belief that this would be contrary to strongly held principles of nonintervention and self-determination of sovereign states. But all countries in the area have more and more come to realize that Communist Cuba represents a security threat to the whole hemisphere. They are persuaded more and more by the fact that real control over Cuba lies not in the hands of the Cuban people but rather in Moscow. Only five countries of Latin America continue to maintain diplomatic relations with the Castro regime.

**Just what is the Monroe Doctrine? How does it apply to the Cuban situation?**

The Monroe Doctrine was stated by President Monroe in his message to Congress December 2, 1823. It was issued as a warning from the young United States to the European Powers that they could not encroach upon any American people, "that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."

This principle is just as valid in 1962 as it was in 1823, though the old imperialism of Western Europe has been replaced by the new and far more menacing political and ideological imperialism of international communism.

The original purpose of the Monroe Doctrine, which was to prevent any extension to the Americas of a despotic political system contrary to the independent status of the countries of this hemisphere, has been adopted and supported by the Organization of American States as a multilateral safeguard for the American Republics. In this spirit, the OAS Charter and the Rio Treaty--the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance--provide the means for common action, if necessary, to protect the hemisphere against intervention or aggression.

**What was the purpose and what were the principal provisions of the 1947 Rio Treaty? Which countries signed it?**

The Rio Treaty was signed by all 21 of the American Republics--including Cuba. It was concluded in order to assure peace, to provide for effective reciprocal assistance to meet armed attacks against any American state, and to deal with threats of aggression against any of them. The treaty establishes the principle that an attack on one of the American states is an attack on all. Decisions on the specified collective measures under the treaty are made by a two-thirds majority and are binding on all states, with the one exception that no state is required to use armed force without its consent.

**Is Cuba still a party to the Rio Treaty of 1947?**

Yes. Cuba is a party to the Rio Treaty and is subject to the obligations of the treaty. In fact, Cuba participated in the application of sanctions under the treaty against the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic in 1961.

**Why does the U.S. need the backing of other Latin American countries when it is the most powerful nation in the West?**

The vital interests of other American countries are at stake in the Cuban crisis both because Cuba is a neighbor and because an outside power has attempted to intrude with strategic weapons into the Americas. We want the cooperation of other American countries to prevent the growth or spread of dangerous situations anywhere in this hemisphere. This is the essence of a collective security system.

**Why did the U.S. take this step without consulting its allies?**

The quarantine was imposed only after a regional organization (OAS) composed of 21 countries and sanctioned by the United Nations determined that the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba constituted a serious threat to the peace of the world. The United States was in continuous consultation concerning Cuba with its allies and other nations for many months prior to the imposition of the quarantine.

The rapidity of the Soviet installation of land-to-land missile bases precluded the consideration of alternatives to our course of action. Only during the week of October 14 did U.S. surveillance reveal the first concrete evidence of the development of offensive ballistic missiles.

**What position did the NATO powers take on the U.S. quarantine of Cuba?**

The governments of the NATO powers fully backed the U.S. action in the Cuban crisis. They concurred in the U.S. analysis of the deliberate and deceitful nature of the Soviet action in introducing nuclear weapons into the Western

Hemisphere. They shared the judgment of the Rio Treaty members that the Soviet missiles in Cuba are a threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere. They recognized explicitly that in the nuclear age the whole free world stands or falls together.

**Is the quarantine imposed by the United States consistent with international law?**

Yes. The quarantine was imposed pursuant to a recommendatory resolution adopted by the governing Council of the Organization of American States in accordance with the terms of the Rio Treaty of 1947. Cuba was a party to this treaty and is a member of the Organization of American States. Regional organizations and their recommendation of the use of such measures are entirely consistent with the United Nations Charter. In fact, the Charter envisioned a major role for such organizations in the promotion of peace and security in circumstances just like this one.

**What is the legal difference between quarantine and blockade?**

A quarantine is a selective effort designed to deal with a specific threat to peace. It must be differentiated from a blockade which is part of the conduct of war, designed to force an enemy state to comply with the will of the blockading country. In the immediate situation, the U.S. quarantine was aimed solely at preventing the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba, in order to protect ourselves and this hemisphere.

**How long will the quarantine be maintained?**

President Kennedy, in a letter to Chairman Khrushchev on October 27, pledged to lift the quarantine and not to invade Cuba, providing two conditions were met. The first is the removal of offensive weapons systems from Cuba, under appropriate U.N. observation and supervision. The second is the halting of further introduction of offensive weapons systems into Cuba, under suitable safeguards. Chairman Khrushchev on October 28 agreed to discontinue

construction of weapons sites and to dismantle the offensive weapons and return them to the Soviet Union.

**How can the United States complain about the Soviets moving into Cuba when the Americans have occupied their base at Guantanamo Bay for 60 years and even now refuse to get out?**

The United States is in Guantanamo by right of treaty fully recognized by the later-American defense system. The Soviet moves into Cuba were, by contrast, conducted secretly, surrounded by false denials of offensive intent, and representing a subversive move into an area traditionally committed to defense of the Western Hemisphere against foreign domination.

**Why does the United States think it is all right for it to send troops all over the world but it is wrong for the U.S.S.R. to send its personnel to Cuba?**

U.S. troops are stationed overseas as part of our contribution to collective security measures. These measures were taken only after general demobilization of U.S. forces after World War II. They were required because of a long series of aggressive acts by the Soviet bloc such as the Berlin blockade and the Korean War.

The stand taken by the United States in the Cuba situation was not a result of the sending of Soviet personnel to Cuba, much as the United States disliked the introduction of Soviet military personnel into this hemisphere. The U.S. action resulted from the construction in Cuba of missile bases which provided a new nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere and thus threatened the peace and security of the Americas and, indeed, of the whole world.

**What is the distinction between Soviet missiles in Cuba and U.S. missiles in NATO countries?**

Our bases abroad were established under open and announced agreements with sovereign states. They serve to strengthen the independence of those countries. Soviet missiles were

placed in Cuba in secret, without any public statements and without any alliance.

Soviet bases in Cuba symbolize that country's subjection to alien control and domination; they were established without the knowledge of the Cuban people and were manned by Soviet personnel.

Our bases on allied territory are manned and serviced jointly with allied personnel. They were provided in cooperation with our allies in the face of the threat of Soviet expansion and aggression as exemplified in Eastern Europe, in Greece and Turkey, in Iran, in Korea, and elsewhere. A decision to station our missiles abroad was made by NATO in December 1957 only after Khrushchev in the previous month had threatened Western Europe with Soviet missiles.

Soviet bases in Cuba created a new and serious impact upon the balance of power in the world and thus imperiled world peace.

No rational comparison may, therefore, be made between the two situations.

### How does President Kennedy's action affect the U.S. position in Berlin?

There is no direct connection between Cuba and Berlin. But as the President said in his October 22 report, we could not leave the Soviet challenge in Cuba unanswered if our commitments were ever to be trusted again by friend or foe. This certainly applies to our vital commitments regarding Berlin.

### Will the United States still try to negotiate with the Soviet Union for disarmament?

President Kennedy, in a statement on October 28 welcoming Chairman Khrushchev's decision to remove Soviet weapons from Cuba, said he hoped that the governments of the world would turn their urgent attention to the compelling necessity for ending the arms race. He cited the military confrontation of the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries and mentioned that there are other situations elsewhere in the world where tensions lead to wasteful diversion of resources to weapons of war.

■ This pamphlet is based on a Department of Defense publication prepared in cooperation with the Department of State for the use of Military Services personnel. It is being issued in the belief that much of the material in the Defense Department's pamphlet will also be of interest to the general public.

A world in which nations and peoples survive and work together in peace and freedom and where the use of force is removed as an instrument of national policy remains a primary goal of the United States. This is a goal which we will continue to pursue because our very survival may depend upon it. And progress toward disarmament is the necessary prerequisite to the fulfillment of this goal.

### What role did the Secretary-General of the United Nations take in the Cuban crisis?

Acting Secretary-General U Thant sent notes to President Kennedy, to Chairman Khrushchev of the U.S.S.R., and to Cuba on October 24, 1962. He urged the United States to refrain for 2 weeks from searching ships headed for Cuba. He urged the U.S.S.R. not to send missiles to Cuba in the same period. During the 2-week "cooling-off" interlude, negotiations were to be conducted. He urged the Cuban government to refrain from any action which could aggravate the situation.

Speaking in the U.N. Security Council, Secretary-General U Thant proposed stopping the actual construction and development of missile sites in Cuba.

On October 30 Secretary-General U Thant flew to Cuba with his principal assistants to discuss with the Castro government arrangements for U.N. verification, as called for by President Kennedy, of the dismantling of Soviet missiles and a halt in the buildup of bases.

### Didn't President Kennedy's action risk bringing on World War III?

On the contrary, the President's action was carefully designed to eliminate a dangerous potential cause of war--the missile bases under construction in Cuba--while taking the least possible risk of bringing on war. In his report to the American people on October 22, he said the 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. He also said the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.

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